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DE RUEHNR #1600 1011455
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0929
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 8398
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY 4606
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY 4104
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 1301
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1927
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1901
RUEANHA/FAA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

UNCLAS NAIROBI 001600

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [FAIR](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KE](#)

SUBJECT: FIVE KENYAN PARLIAMENTARIANS KILLED IN CRASH

REF: NAIROBI 1573

¶1. (U) The April 10 crash of a Kenyan Air Force Y-12 plane in Marsabit, north-central Kenya (reftel), claimed the lives of 14 of 17 passengers, including five sitting members of Parliament. Announcing the names of the deceased and injured, President Kibaki declared three days of national mourning. Kibaki noted in his April 10 condolence address that the aircraft was carrying a "peace delegation" to ease tension in the long-running tribal conflicts in the Marsabit area.

¶2. (U) The government separately announced that an initial investigation indicated the aircraft may have crashed due to poor visibility, the result of bad weather in the area. Immediately following the accident, Internal Security Minister John Michuki and Defense Minister Njenga Karume, along with the Commissioner of Police and military officials, flew to Marsabit. The Kenyan Air Force is conducting an investigation into the cause of the crash. The tail piece remains the largest single piece of wreckage -- and the only real hint that the crash site was once an airplane.

¶3. (U) Four survivors were initially removed from the burned wreckage: Patrick Osare, Eastern Province Provincial Commissioner, Peter King'ola, Moyale District Commissioner, and two Air Force crew members. King'ola died on the emergency return flight to Nairobi, while the other three are being treated in Nairobi. Two assistant ministers: Mirugi Kariuki, Internal Security, and Titus Ngoyoni, Regional Development, were killed in the crash as well as MPs Bonaya Godana (North Horr constituency and Deputy Leader of the parliamentary opposition), Abdi Sasura (Saku constituency), and Gurach Galgallo (Moyale constituency). Other passengers who died were: Lt. General (Ret.) Abdulahi Aden, MP in the East African Legislative Assembly; a Reverend of the Anglican Church; two police officials; the Provincial Intelligence Officer; an Undersecretary in the Office of the President; and two Air Force pilots.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: The Marsabit plane crash is a national tragedy for Kenya. It is also a double blow to the historically marginalized north-central part of the country; the region lost four key political leaders who were influential both in their local areas and on the national scene. Themselves ethnically Borana (Sasura, Galgallo), Gabra (Godana), and Rendille (Ngoyoni), the MPs' collaboration on the peace mission was to resolve conflicts they themselves had often personally been accused of stoking.

As such, their efforts now were to serve as a model for inter-tribal harmony. Godana's death is also a major loss for the KANU party. As Uhuru Kenyatta's deputy, the former foreign minister was an experienced and respected politician certain to play a leading role in KANU's bid to regain Statehouse in the 2007 elections. END COMMENT.
BELLAMY